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news release

DE LA GARZA ANNOUNCES USDA FUNDS FOR RABIES CONTROL

For immediate release
Thursday, November 3, 1994

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WASHINGTON -- Congressman Kika de la Garza (D-TX) announced Thursday that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will provide more than \$1.3 million to help the Texas Department of Health fight the spread of rabies in South Texas this winter.

"South Texans have been living under a state-declared health emergency since July because of the spread of canine rabies which threatens livestock, pets and humans. This winter is the time to launch a comprehensive vaccination program. I am very pleased USDA has agreed to our request for additional funding to help state officials get this rabies outbreak under control. This USDA funding will go a long way in helping the state implement an effective control program to stop the spread of rabies," said Rep. de la Garza.

Responding to the request of Rep. de la Garza and Texas Governor Ann Richards, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has approved \$1,319,302 to help launch a rabies control program using bait laced with an oral vaccine. The USDA funding will be used to defray the costs of bait units, aerial drops and measuring the effectiveness of the effort. The Oral Rabies Vaccination Project is designed to create a zone of vaccinated animals and thereby halt the spread of rabies northward toward San Antonio and Houston. Attention could then be focused on bringing the rabies problem under control in South Texas itself.

"I am pleased that the U.S. Department of Agriculture acted quickly and approved funds to control the spread of rabies in South and West-Central Texas," said Governor Richards. "These funds will allow to control the rabies outbreak while time is still on our side. I am grateful for the assistance of Congressman Kika de la Garza and the cooperation of the Agriculture Department."

Congressman de la Garza has been working for several months with Texas Governor Ann Richards and other South Texas officials to win USDA funding to help launch the control effort.

"In addition to providing funds, APHIS will be actively involved in administering the rabies-control effort," said Patricia Jensen, USDA Acting Assistant of Marketing, "and we will be working closely with the Texas Department of Health and others as we maintain this proactive approach to prevent further spread of the outbreak."

[The following background was prepared by the Texas Department of Health.]

2 attachments